

Rock and Water UK



Type of intervention



Classroom setting



Group Work

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Additional
Resource

Classroom Setting, Group Work | Spanish

Target population

Children and young people in schools, community and youth justice, and residential settings.

Delivery organisation

Rock and Water (UK) Ltd is the contracted provider of Rock and Water training courses in the United Kingdom, in partnership with Mr Freerk Ykema and the Gadaku Institute in the Netherlands. Over 60,000 educators and professionals have been trained to deliver the Rock and Water programme, in more than 25 countries. The programme has been delivered to over 2.5 million young people.

Mode and context of delivery

Teachers and other relevant professionals approach Rock and Water (UK) when they require, or are interested in, supporting their children and young people to develop a number of skills such as resilience, stress management, self-esteem and confidence. The programme is delivered by trained professionals within their relevant settings.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Educators and other professionals can enrol on a three-day training course. After this training, the programme can be implemented immediately as described in the manual with great effect, though teachers and practitioners are encouraged to shape their delivery to best suit the needs of their young people and focus upon specific outcomes (e.g. social skills, bullying, class cohesion, anti-violence, confidence development, goal setting) or to cover all of these over-time. However, trained practitioners are not entitled to train other service professionals.

A recommended and cost-effective approach towards whole-school implementation is to send two staff members to complete the three-day training in order to support one another in its implementation. Followed by the One-Day Introductory Workshop at your school or organisation for all staff to experience and best support the embedding of the programme.

Three-day training schedule:

Day 1) Introduction to Rock and Water

- Changes in society and education
- Learning to be centred and grounded
- Learning to deal with physical and mental pressure
- Introducing the Rock and Water concept
- Learning how to deal with bullying
- Physical exercise games such as Chinese Boxing, Chinese Sticky Hands
- Rock and Water in verbal confrontation

Day 2) Introduction to the Psychophysical Triangle in its relation to the development of empathic feeling and social competency

- Social identity
- Impact of hormones on brain development and behaviour
- Breathing strength and control
- Body language and its impact on self-image, memory and others
- Simple self-defense exercises to enhance self-control, self-confidence and the development of ethical behaviour
- Intuition exercises
- How to deal with a threatening group
- The Male brain and Female brain

Day 3) Psychological identity and spiritual identity

- Learning how to deal with group pressure
 - Rock and Water in a relationship
 - Sexuality
 - Mental strength and inner strength exercises
- Evaluation and Certificates

"I have run the program in so many varied ways it is incredible from a universal approach with whole classes to targeted small groups of young people with high needs." - Paul Edwards, Phd RN MA Mental Health Professional

"This year in the Junior School, we have introduced the Rock and Water programme across all year levels to assist in teaching social skills through physical activities. Throughout the Junior School, it is pleasing to see a common verbal and body language emerging as the boys move as water or stand their ground as rock. Growth in self-control, self-reflection and self-confidence has been terrific to observe." - Tim Simpson, Deputy Head

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

For the three-day training course, staff participate in 24 taught hours which includes four hours of theory and 20 hours of practical experience.

For the one-day training course, staff participate in 90 minutes of theory and six hours of practical.

Implementation of the programme involves both staff and student participation. There are 175 exercises to be delivered by staff to pupils, which can be conducted within 24 lessons of approximately 90 minutes each, or 48 lessons of approximately 50 minutes each.

Description of intervention

The Rock and Water programme offers professionals a new way to interact with children and young people through a psychophysical teaching approach. Simply put, physical exercises are constantly and intentionally linked with mental and social skill development. The Rock and Water programme leads from games, simple self-defense, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence. It combines learning through experience and actions and learning through expressing oneself and conversation. Both these aspects are as important as each other and together they create an intense learning process.

The topics covered in the programme are connected by four red threads:

- 1) Learning how to ground yourself (stand strong and relaxed), how to centre yourself (breath in the stomach) and how to focus (directing the attention and concentration)
- 2) Development of the psychophysical triangle: body awareness – emotional awareness – self-awareness. Emotions are expressed physically as muscle tension, high breath or low breath, heart rate etc. As we become more aware of our bodies we gain greater insight and experience of our own reaction patterns which offers significant opportunities for deepening our emotional- and self-awareness and increasing our power of self-control.

3) Development of physical communication forms as a basis for development of other more verbally oriented forms of communication.

4) The Rock & Water concept: The Rock and Water programme teaches that every action and communication can be filtered through a conceptual framework of apparent opposites, the strong and uncompromising Rock attitude versus the flexible and connecting Water attitude. This concept can be developed and applied from the physical, verbal and relational perspectives. Physically, this means that an attack can be countered by firmly tightened muscles (rock) but can often even more effectively be dealt with using a flexible approach that moves with the energy of the attacker (water action). In a conversation one can choose a strong and uncompromising Rock attitude or opt for a more communicative Water attitude.

The emphasis on kinaesthetic learning patterns practiced through a series of physical exercises and games, some of which are martial arts based, evoke a physical and psychological response. Students learn to feel how their body reacts to situations and develop skills to control how their body responds by recognising the cues. They are made aware of how others respond and have opportunity to discuss how their social competency can be enhanced by following a series of steps to promote open and honest communication in the playground and classroom. Each participant of the Rock and Water programme undergoes a journey of self-awareness as they learn about responding to life with either a "rock" or a "water" attitude. The use of symbolism is central to the success of the programme and one of the reasons why young people are so attracted to it.

Rock and Water is designed to enhance children's resilience skills, monitor and identify their reactive behaviour patterns when placed in times of stress, and to develop their capacity to work effectively in a group situation by analysing how relationships are strengthened and to stand with focus and determination as an individual.

Evaluation

Research conducted by De Graff, Haas, Zaagsma, and Wijzen (2015) evidenced that Rock and Water has been found to reduce sexually aggressive behaviours.

Abstract: Sexual aggression among adolescents is a common problem which is related to lack of aggression regulation, positive or permissive attitudes towards sexual coercion, group pressure and inadequate communicative skills. Rock and Water is a psycho-physical intervention which addresses these issues. We conducted a quasi-experimental trial of Rock and Water in the Netherlands. In total, 521 boys aged 14–17 from nine pre-vocational education schools were included. The primary outcome variable was sexual aggression. Secondary outcomes were sexual interaction competence, self-regulation, attitudes towards dating violence, self-efficacy and self-esteem. Data were collected prior to the intervention, immediately after the intervention and five months after termination of the intervention. Boys reported a significant reduction in coercive strategies and particularly verbal manipulation (OR = .48). At follow-up, the boys reported a significant improvement in self-regulation and general self-efficacy ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$ and $\beta = 1.02$, p .

Details of other research projects relating to the implementation of Rock and Water are outlined below as references.

References

De Graaf, I., de Haas, S., Zaagsma, M., & Wijzen, C. (2016). Effects of rock and water: an intervention to prevent sexual aggression. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 22(1), 4-19.

Edwards, P. C. (2013). An action research project examining anger and aggression with rural adolescent males participating in the Rock and Water Program.

Reitz, E., Mertens, E., van Londen, M., & Deković, M. Changes in social safety, feelings of competence, and depressive feelings of primary school children who have participated in the intervention program Rock and Water: A comparison study.

See <https://www.rockandwater.org.uk/research> for details of other research studies

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